

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 161662

NODIS
CHEROKEE

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 15709 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JUN 23.

QUOTE: S E C R E T CAIRO 15709

NODIS

CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV XF US
SUBJECT: PROPOSED LONDON MIDDLE EAST TALKS

REF: (A) CAIRO 15703 (B) STATE 159179
(C) STATE 159904

1. SUMMARY: MET WITH FONMIN KAMEL TODAY IN ALEXANDRIA
TO BRIEF HIM ON PROPOSED SCENARIO. SADAT WAS UNFOR-
TUNATELY INDISPOSED AND SEEING NO ONE EXCEPT VP MUBARAK.
AT OUTSET OF PRESENTATION, I EXPLAINED WHY KAMEL'S
COUNTER-SUGGESTION THAT SECRETARY FIRST VISIT AREA IS
SECRET

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NOT PRACTICAL, BUT EMPHASIZED WE HAVE SOUGHT TO ACCOM-
MODATE HIM ON TIMING BY DEFERRING DATES OF PROPOSED
MEETING. ALSO TOLD HIM OF LEAK, WHICH MAKES IT NECESSARY
BRIEF ISRAELIS IN GENERAL TERMS AND EMPHASIZES NEED FOR
SPEEDY DECISION. MAHER NOTED TODAY'S AL-AKHBAR
CARRIES THE STORY ATTRIBUTED TO "WASHINGTON SOURCES".
KAMEL REMAINED DEEPLY WORRIED AND ARGUED INTER ALIA
THERE WILL BE NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT AND THAT SUCH MEETING
WILL UNDERCUT CRITICS OF BEGIN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ISRAEL.
IT WILL ALSO ALLOW BEGIN TO CROW HIS TACTICS ARE SUCCESS-

FUL AS EVIDENCED BY EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT TO ATTEND. HE UNDERSTANDS USG DESIRE BE HELPFUL, BUT NOTED GOE MUST ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ARAB REACTION. NO ARAB--FRIEND OR FOE--WILL FIND IT COMPREHENSIBLE THAT EGYPT AGREES TO DIRECT TALKS SO SOON AFTER TOTALLY UNSATISFACTORY ISRAELI RESPONSES. FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD TOLD MAREI THAT, IN LIGHT ISRAELI RESPONSES, THERE SHOULD BE NO FURTHER TALKS IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. ASSURED KAMEL WE UNDERSTAND GOE CONCERNS ABOUT ARAB REACTION, BUT REMINDED HIM WE ARE PREPARED TO WEIGH IN WITH HUSSEIN AND FAHD AT APPROPRIATE TIME AND THAT INVITATION WILL COME FROM PRESIDENT CARTER. THIS SHOULD HELP SADAT EXPLAIN TO CRITICS WHY HE HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION. WE SHARE GOE VIEW THAT INTERNAL QUESTIONING WITHIN ISRAEL SHOULD BE GIVEN ADEQUATE TIME, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE PROPOSED MEETING WILL ADVERSELY IMPACT ON FERMENTATION PROCESS ALREADY UNDERWAY IN ISRAEL. KAMEL THEN CLAIMED THAT SADAT HAS REVERSED HIS EARLIER VIEW THAT KAMEL SHOULD ATTEND AND NOW ARGUES THAT ISRAELI RESPONSES MAKE SUCH EARLY MEETING UNDESIRABLE. IN VIEW MUBARAK'S EARLIER CAUTIONING NOT TO ARGUE SADAT'S ALLEGED VIEW WITH KAMEL, I SIMPLY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL BE WILLING RECONSIDER IN LIGHT OF THE POINTS I HAD MADE TO SECRET

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HIM. WE AGREED THAT WE SHOULD MEET WITH SADAT TOMORROW, SATURDAY, AND MEETING IS NOW FIXED FOR 1230 LOCAL IN ALEXANDRIA. WILL FLY UP AND BACK WITH VP MUBARAK AND REPORT ASAP AFTER MY RETURN TOMORROW AFTERNOON. END SUMMARY.

2. REF B INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED LATE LAST NIGHT. AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, ENTIRE PRESIDENCY MENAGERIE AND KAMEL/ GHALI WERE IN ALEXANDRIA FOR MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENTS SEKOU TOURE AND SAID BARRE AND SECURE PHONE TO ALEXANDRIA WAS OUT. I THEREFORE DECIDED TO DRIVE TO ALEXANDRIA THIS MORNING TO TAKE CHANCE THAT AD HOC MEETING WITH SADAT MIGHT BE ARRANGED THERE. AS IT TURNED OUT, SADAT WAS "VERY EXHAUSTED" AFTER HIS LENGTHY MEETINGS WITH THE TWO AFRICAN PRESIDENTS AND WAS SEEING NO ONE EXCEPT VP MUBARAK TODAY. PRESIDENCY INDICATED SADAT COULD SEE ME AT 1230 TOMORROW, SATURDAY. SINCE FONMIN KAMEL AND AHMED MAHER WERE IN ALEXANDRIA, I DECIDED MEET WITH KAMEL TO SEE IF WE COULD WORK MATTER OUT. I SPENT ALMOST TWO HOURS WITH THE TWO OF THEM, WITH RESULTS SET FORTH BELOW.

3. I FIRST TOLD KAMEL THAT WE HAD CAREFULLY CONSIDERED HIS EARLIER PROPOSALS THAT (A) A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY SHOULD PRECEDE A DIRECT EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI MEETING, AND (B) THE NEED FOR MORE TIME BEFORE ANY DIRECT MEETING TAKES PLACE (CAIRO 15340). ON HIS FIRST PROPOSAL, AS

I HAD TOLD HIM THE OTHER DAY, WE SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE REVERSING THE PROCEDURE WILL BE A FRUITFUL EXERCISE. THE ISRAELIS WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE THE POINT THAT EGYPT SCUTTLED THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL COMMITTEE TALKS AND THAT IT IS INCUMBENT UPON EGYPT TO CORRECT THIS SITUATION. AS I HAD TOLD HIM, WE NEED TO POSITION OURSELVES PROPERLY TO GIVE US OPTIMUM OPPORTUNITY PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE. ON HIS SECOND POINT HAVING TO DO WITH TIMING, WE HAVE SOUGHT TO ACCOMMODATE HIM AND I THEN GAVE HIM SECRET

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IN DETAIL SCENARIO SET FORTH REF B, INCLUDING PREFERRED JULY 11-12 DATES, LONDON VENUE, WHAT MIGHT BE DISCUSSED, AND OUR WILLINGNESS MAKE DEMARCHES TO KING HUSSEIN AND PRINCE FAHD AT APPROPRIATE TIME TO SUPPORT OUR RPT OUR INITIATIVE. I EMPHASIZED OUR HOPE THAT, IF BOTH EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS AGREE, WE CAN MOVE QUICKLY WITH A VIEW TO MAKING ANNOUNCEMENT EARLY NEXT WEEK. ALSO INDICATED OUR VIEW THAT ANNOUNCEMENT STATE THAT ISRAELI WEST BANK/GAZA AND PERTINENT EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL BE DISCUSSED. MAHER TOOK CAREFUL NOTES AND ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ASKED THAT I REPEAT POINTS TO BE SURE HE GOT THEM DOWN RIGHT.

4. I THEN EMPHASIZED NEED TO HOLD PROPOSED SCENARIO CLOSE UNTIL IT IS ANNOUNCED. IN LIGHT REF C, HOWEVER, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO TELL HIM THERE HAS BEEN A LEAK SOMEWHERE AND THAT WE ARE THEREFORE GIVING ISRAELIS, IN RESPONSE THEIR SPECIFIC QUERY, AN IDEA OF GENERAL CONCEPT WE HAVE IN MIND. IT WAS A GOOD THING THAT I DID. MAHER NOTED THAT TODAY'S AL-AKHBAR CARRIES DETAILED ACCOUNT ATTRIBUTED TO "WASHINGTON SOURCES" OF PROPOSED EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI MEETING AND LONDON VENUE. (I HAD NOT SEEN IT BECAUSE OF EARLY MORNING DEPARTURE.) THIS LEAK, MAHER NOTED, WILL MEAN OTHER ARABS WILL QUICKLY BECOME AWARE OF PROPOSED MEETING AND BEGIN TO QUERY ABOUT IT. I SAID THAT WE DEEPLY REGRET LEAK, BUT NOTED IT UNDERSCORES NEED FOR EXPEDITIOUS DECISION. HALF JOKINGLY, MAHER WONDERED IF WASHINGTON LEAK IS AN EFFORT TO PUT PRESSURE ON GOE TO AGREE. I STRONGLY DENIED ANY SUCH SUGGESTION.

5. KAMEL, WHO HAD LISTENED TO MY PRESENTATION WITH HIS CUSTOMARY WORRIED LOOK, THEN DID SOME SEARCHING SECRET

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PROBING:

(A) HE FIRST PROFESSED STILL NOT TO UNDERSTAND WHY HIS REVERSED SCENARIO, I.E., SECRETARY VISITING AREA

FIRST, WAS NOT FEASIBLE. I AGAIN EXPLAINED REASONS WHY IT IS NOT. AT THIS POINT, MAHER RECALLED THAT WHEN WE WERE SPEAKING OF A SECOND HALF OF MAY PRESENTATION OF OUR PROPOSALS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CAMP DAVID TALKS, NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT PRIOR NEED FOR A DIRECT EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI MEETING. WHY THE CHANGE? I SAID WE HAD IN THE MEANTIME DONE SOME MORE THINKING ABOUT HOW BEST TO POSITION OURSELVES TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE, INCLUDING ASSESSING THE POST-AIRCRAFT DEAL CLIMATE IN ISRAEL AND IN THE UNITED STATES, AND HAVE CONCLUDED THAT SUCH A DIRECT MEETING IS AN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY NEXT STEP FOR OUR PURPOSES. I WAS SURE KAMEL WOULD AGREE THAT SOME ELEMENT OF FLEXIBILITY IS NEEDED TO DETERMINE OPTIMUM TACTICS IN LIGHT OF THE DEVELOPING SITUATION.

(B) KAMEL THEN ARGUED THAT THERE WILL REALLY BE NOTHING TO DISCUSS AT SUCH A MEETING: BEGIN'S PLAN AND THE ISRAELI RESPONSES ARE TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO GOE. HE ASSUMED THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL, WHEN PRESENTED, WILL BE EQUALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO ISRAELIS. WHAT THEN DO WE SEE AS THE OUTCOME OF SUCH A MEETING? I COUNTERED THERE LIKELY BE MORE TO DISCUSS THAN KAMEL HAD SUGGESTED. I RECALLED THAT WHEN I HAD FIRST TOLD SADAT ABOUT THE TWO QUESTIONS WE WERE PUTTING TO THE ISRAELIS, THE PRESIDENT HAD INSTRUCTED VP MUBARAK TO MEET WITH KAMEL AND PRIMIN SALEM IN ORDER TO DRAW UP SOME EGYPTIAN "QUESTIONS" WHICH MIGHT BE PUT TO THE ISRAELIS WHEN THEIR REPLIES WERE IN. UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE ENSUING TWO MONTHS, THE CONCEPT OF SUCH QUESTIONS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LOST IN THE SCHUFFLE. IT SEEMED TO ME, HOWEVER, THAT WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAD IN MIND COULD BE AN INTEGRAL
SECRET

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PART OF THE TYPE OF MEETING WE PROPOSED. IT IS CERTAINLY NOT TOO LATE TO FRAME THE KIND OF QUESTIONS SADAT HAD IN MIND AND USE THEM AT PROPOSED MEETING. AS FOR AN OUTCOME, I THOUGHT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ALL PARTIES THAT IT BE DEMONSTRATED WHETHER OR NOT DIRECT TALKS CAN PRODUCE POSITIVE RESULTS. WE SHOULD ALL KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON THIS MATTER.

(C) KAMEL THEN ASKED WHAT WILL BE INCLUDED IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S INVITATION LETTER AND IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT. TOLD HIM THAT I HAD NO SPECIFIC WORD ON HOW PRESIDENT CARTER'S INVITATION LETTER WILL BE FRAMED. ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT, AS I HAD ALREADY TOLD HIM, WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD MAKE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT WEST BANK/GAZA WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION. IF OUR EGYPTIAN FRIENDS HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS IN THIS REGARD, WE WOULD, OF COURSE, WELCOME HAVING THEM.

6. KAMEL REMAINED WORRIED. HE SAID HE UNDERSTANDS OUR DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL, BUT GOE MUST ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LIKELY ARAB REACTION. AFTER THE NEGATIVE ISRAELI RESPONSES TO OUR QUESTIONS, NO ARAB--FRIEND OR FOE--WILL FIND IT COMPREHENSIBLE THAT EGYPT COULD AGREE TO DIRECT TALKS WITH THE ISRAELI FONMIN. WHAT IS MORE, BEGIN WILL CROW THAT HE WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG AS EVIDENCED BY SADAT'S WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN DIRECT TALKS. APART FROM THESE CONSIDERATIONS, KAMEL ARGUED GOE WILL BE DOING A DISSERVICE TO THE MANY CRITICS OF BEGIN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ISRAEL BY AGREEING TO SUCH DIRECT TALKS. HE NOTED WEIZMAN HAS PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE INADEQUATE NATURE OF THE ISRAELI RESPONSES AS HAVE MANY OTHERS IN ISRAEL. IN THE UNITED STATES, EVEN SENATOR JAVITS HAS CRITICIZED THE ISRAELI SECRET

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RESPONSES. USG STATEMENT HAS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE ISRAELI REPLIES. VIRTUALLY EVERY OTHER GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO DONE SO. WHY UNDERCUT ALL THESE CRITICS OF BEGIN BY SEEMING TO MEET ISRAELI DESIRES? WHAT IS NEEDED NOW, KAMEL ARGUED, IS MORE TIME SO THAT THE INTERNAL FERMENTATION PROCESS IN ISRAEL CAN WORK. KAMEL ADDED FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD TOLD SAYID MAREI THAT, IN LIGHT ISRAELI RESPONSES, THERE SHOULD BE NO FURTHER TALKS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. A BIT OF TIME IS NEEDED TO ALLOW THE DUST TO SETTLE.

7. I SAID THAT WE UNDERSTAND GOE CONCERNS ABOUT ARAB REACTION. AS I HAD TOLD HIM, HOWEVER, WE ARE PREPARED TO WEIGH IN AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME WITH KING HUSSEIN AND PRINCE FAHD TO SUPPORT THE IDEA. ARAB EXTREMISTS WILL ATTACK EGYPT WHATEVER SADAT DOES AND SHOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE GIVEN GREAT WEIGHT. IN ANY CASE, SADAT COULD SAY THAT HE IS ACCOMMODATING PRESIDENT CARTER BY AGREEING TO LATTER'S SPECIFIC REQUEST THAT EGYPTIAN FONMIN MEET WITH ISRAELI COUNTERPART. THIS SHOULD DEMONSTRATE CLEARLY THAT SUCH A MEETING IS NOT AN EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE. WE SHARE EGYPTIAN VIEW THAT INTERNAL FERMENT WITHIN ISRAEL SHOULD BE GIVEN ADEQUATE TIME TO WORK, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH A DIRECT MEETING WILL ADVERSELY IMPACT UPON THE PROCESS ALREADY UNDERWAY IN ISRAEL. INDEED, OUR PURPOSE HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE TO ENCOURAGE THE INTERNAL QUESTIONING THAT IS NOW TAKING PLACE IN ISRAEL AND WE BELIEVE PROPOSED MEETING, IF HANDLED RIGHT, WILL HELP THIS PROCESS. I NOTED THAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON ASSUMPTION THAT PRESIDENT SADAT NEEDS SOME REASONABLY QUICK ACTION. IF THIS IS NOT CORRECT AND THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT TIME IS NOT A FACTOR, THEN WE COULD ALL LOOK AT THE MATTER AGAIN WITH A VIEW TO WORKING MORE LEISURELY ON THE SUBJECT. MY COMMENT CAUSED KAMEL

QUICKLY TO GO INTO REVERSE GEAR. HE SAID THAT SADAT
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DOES BELIEVE MATTERS MUST MOVE REASONABLY QUICKLY,
ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO BE SURE WE HAVE FIRST
WORKED OUT ALL DETAILS OF OUR JOINT STRATEGY.

8. KAMEL THEN PULLED A NEW ONE OUT OF HIS HAT. HE
CLAIMED THAT, DESPITE MUBARAK'S ASSURANCES TO ME THE
OTHER DAY, SADAT HAD TOLD HIM YESTERDAY THAT IN THE
LIGHT OF THE ISRAELI RESPONSES, THE PRESIDENT DID NOT
NOW BELIEVE A DIRECT MEETING SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE
IMMEDIATE FUTURE. INSTEAD, THE PRESIDENT HAD LIKED
KAMEL'S IDEA THAT THE SECRETARY COME TO THE AREA FIRST.
SINCE MUBARAK HAD EARLIER CAUTIONED ME NOT TO ARGUE
THE POINT WITH KAMEL, I DID NOT DO SO. I LIMITED MY
COMMENT TO EXPRESSING STRONG HOPE THAT IF SADAT HAD
INDEED REVERSED HIS EARLIER POSITION, I HOPED HE WOULD
BE PREPARED RECONSIDER IN LIGHT OF POINTS I HAD MADE TO
KAMEL AND WOULD REPEAT TO SADAT. WE AGREED THAT WE
SHOULD BOTH MEET WITH SADAT TOMORROW, SATURDAY, AND A
MEETING HAS BEEN ARRANGED FOR 1230 LOCAL IN ALEXANDRIA.

9. FOLLOWING MY RETURN TO CAIRO, I ARRANGED WITH VP
MUBARAK THAT IF WILL FLY UP WITH HIM AT 1030 TOMORROW
MORNING AND RETURN WITH HIM ABOUT 1530. IF DEPT HAS
ANY FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS, PLEASE LET ME HAVE THEM BY
0930 LOCAL (0330 GMT) TOMORROW, WHEN I MUST LEAVE EMBASSY
FOR AIRPORT. WILL REPORT RESULTS OF TOMORROW'S MEETING
ASAP AFTER MY RETURN.

10. DEPT MAY WISH REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO TEL AVIV
FOR SAM LEWIS. EILTS
UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

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